

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF PERCUSSION SOLOS OPUS 21 & 24.1 BY NEBOJŠA JOVAN ŽIVKOVIĆ

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The Serbian-born, German university educated Nebojša Jovan Živković is a virtuoso percussionist and an acclaimed composer of a large body of innovative music. The concert percussion community has embraced several of these works and this document examines two solo pieces: “ULTIMATUM I for Solo Marimba,” Opus 24.1 (1990/91), and “Generally Spoken It Is Nothing But Rhythm for Percussion Solo,” Opus 21 (1994/95). The intention of this study is to be a practical performance guide to aid in making decisions that will inform expressive interpretation. Both works are examined in the context of the formal structure and how the motivic, thematic, and harmonic elements relate to the form. Performance aspects such as instrument selection, setup optimization, interpretation, utilization of expressive dynamics and articulations, dynamic balance, extended techniques, universal four-mallet techniques, practice strategies, and suggestions for preparation are included.

Overall, the challenges of “ULTIMATUM I” are many—technical, musical, physical, and emotional. The composer’s comments concerning Opus 24.1 focus on an energetic

and expressive attitude. The energy is written into the music, but the performer must communicate this ultimate energy to the audience. Opus 24.1 has an angular texture, complex rhythms, fast tempos, and extremely loud dynamics. The *aggressivo* middle section contains many of the greatest challenges of the piece.

Inherent to any multi-percussion setup are technical challenges and these are compounded in “Generally Spoken“ due to the inclusion of the vibraphone. Opus 21 is an excellent addition to any percussion recital and a performance will captivate the audience—due in particular to the unique sonorities achieved between tuned almglocken, tuned toms, Chinese gongs, and vibraphone.

The music of Živković may have limited appeal to listeners unaccustomed to solo concert percussion. More scholarly research into Živković’s personal history, Balkan heritage, and compositional concepts may help widen audience appreciation.